

MOSCOW'S FORCES SEIZE 2 KEY SITES FROM LITHUANIANS

PARATROOPS STAGE RAIDS

Watchful Estonia Parliament Adopts Slower Transition to Regain Sovereignty

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

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MOSCOW, March 30 — Soviet forces took over the State Prosecutor's Office in the Lithuanian capital today and seized the printing plant where the republic's main independence newspapers are printed, Lithuanian officials said.

No resistance or injuries were reported in the raids by Soviet paratroopers. But the moves are the most serious so far in a week of steady harassment by Kremlin forces intent on forcing Lithuania to retreat from the declaration of independence approved on March 11 by the republic's Parliament in Vilnius, the capital.

The heightened Soviet pressure on Lithuania was reported as the Parliament of a neighboring Baltic republic, Estonia, mindful of the independence crisis in Lithuania, approved a slower, more deliberate path toward restoring full sovereignty. The third Baltic republic, Latvia, is expected to pursue its own independence plan next month at a Parliament meeting.

Prosecutor Is Replaced

The Prosecutor's Office in Lithuania was the first government building to be seized in the continuing campaign of nighttime raids in the republic.

Earlier in the day, a Deputy Prosecutor from Moscow, Aleksei Vasilev, arrived at the office and criticized the breakaway republic for appointing a new Chief Prosecutor, Arturis Paulauskas, without Moscow's approval. Mr. Vasilev brought with him another Lithuanian, Antanas Petrauskas, to replace Mr. Paulauskas.

After staff members reacted angrily to the move, Lithuanian officials said, the soldiers took over the building.

The printing plant, like the other half-dozen properties occupied by Soviet forces this week, was a Communist Party enterprise that printed various publications, including the main organ of the Sajudis independence movement and the chief daily newspapers that carry the Lithuanian Government's news and statements at length.

Correspondents Curbed

The latest reports from Lithuania came on a day when most foreign correspondents there were ordered out of the republic, and the movements and reporting efforts of those who remained were severely limited.

The authorities in Vilnius said there were no immediate signs of other raids by the paratroopers, who move about the Baltic capital at double-time and in full battle gear. Vulnerable sites include the republic's television center and the Parliament, the seat of the breakaway government. Lithuanian militiamen were stationed at both places, armed only with nightsticks.

"The intimidation and takeovers picked up remarkably," said William J. H. Hough 3d, a New York lawyer who is in Vilnius advising the fledgling gov-



Associated Press

Aleksei Vasilev, a Soviet deputy prosecutor, announcing yesterday in Vilnius that Antanas Petrauskas, right, would succeed Arturas Paulauskas,

left, as the Lithuanian prosecutor. Soviet troops sent to quell the independence movement had taken control of the Prosecutor's Office earlier in the day.

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ernment of President Vytautas Landsbergis.

He said the troops had in both cases seized buildings already under Soviet sway. No one was being allowed into the printing plant, and there was no immediate word on whether the presses would be permitted to operate for the papers that support the republic's two-year-long separatist drive.

The Baltic Position

There was no immediate confirmation or comment here from the Soviet authorities, who have maintained that the troop actions were legitimate attempts to enforce law and order in a Soviet republic that has no right to declare its independence unilaterally.

The three Baltic republics, Lithuanian, Latvia and Estonia, fell to Soviet annexation 50 years ago, and all insist that Soviet rule has since been illegal. Drives to reclaim independence gained momentum rapidly in recent years as the changes instituted by Mikhail S. Gorbachev allowed public debate to take hold.

The Estonian Parliament, firmly in

Visiting U.S. Lawyer An Expert on Baltics

William J. H. Hough 3rd, the Manhattan lawyer who is advising the Lithuanian government, published a legal study of the republic's 1940 annexation by the Soviet Union and testified before Congress on the subject.

Although Mr. Hough is not of Lithuanian descent, he is known as "a friend of the Baltic cause," Victor A. Nakas, manager of the Washington office of the Lithuanian Information Center, said last night. The center, which is run by Lithuanian-Americans, distributes information about events in Lithuania.

His 232-page paper, published in 1985 in the New York Law School Journal of International and Comparative Law, was entitled, "The Annexation of the Baltic States and Its Effect on the Development of Law Prohibiting Forceable Seizure of Territory."



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Deputies in Tallinn voted to begin Estonian republic's restoration.

the control of separatist deputies, decided that rather than fully declaring independence, as Lithuania has done, Estonia would have a "transitional period" to break from Soviet rule step by step across an unspecified time period.

Estonian deputies said their slower path was a result of basic differences between the Estonian and Lithuanian situations. They denied that the pressure that President Gorbachev has exerted on Lithuania was making Estonians hesitant about their independence drive.

Estonian deputies also put off until Monday a vote on a proposal that would support Lithuania and condemn the Kremlin's use of "ultimatums and military pressure" there.

In a statement on its own move for independence, the Estonian Parliament said in part: "The Supreme Soviet of Estonia does not recognize the legality of state authority of the U.S.S.R. on the territory of Estonia. The Supreme Soviet declares a beginning of a period of transition that will culminate in the formation of the constitutional organs of state power of the republic of Estonia. The restoration of the republic of Estonia has begun."

Reacting to the latest Soviet raids, officials in Vilnius characterized them as a particular "insult" to President Bush, whose Administration has not heeded President Landsbergis's pleas for official recognition. The White House has been privately urging mod-

eration in dealing with the Kremlin.

Early in the day, a letter from Mr. Bush, sent on Thursday, was delivered from the American Embassy here to the Foreign Ministry. [In his letter, Mr. Bush appealed for a peaceful end to the secession crisis but assured the Soviet President that the United States was not seeking to make things difficult for the Kremlin, the White House said.]

In an effort to stir up sentiment for the independence drive, the Lithuanian Government has repeatedly reminded the Western democracies of the decades of moral support they extended to the Baltics before Mr. Gorbachev revolutionized Soviet policies and the political balance of Europe.

It was not immediately clear what practical effect the arrival of the new Prosecutor, Mr. Petrauskas, could have on the republic's administration of justice. Lithuanian officials have said any new appointee from Moscow would be likely to be isolated in his office by the fact that most local government workers in the Prosecutor's Office support the independence drive.

Byelorussia Lays Claims

MOSCOW, March 30 (Reuters) — The republic of Byelorussia said today that it would lay claim to the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, and six other districts if Lithuania seceded from the Soviet Union.

Byelorussia's Parliament said in a statement that agreements in 1939 and 1940 on the disputed territory would become invalid if Lithuania became independent.

"We shall be obliged to insist on the return of Byelorussian land to the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic," the Soviet press agency Tass quoted the statement as saying.

The announcement opened up a potential hornet's nest of claims and counterclaims over a region that has been fought over by innumerable rulers for hundreds of years.

A volunteer at the breakaway Lithuanian Government's Information Bureau dismissed the move as a provocation. Vilnius, which is barely 18 miles from the current border, had never belonged to Byelorussia, he said.

The Byelorussian statement identified the six rural districts as Sventsenis and parts of Vidzy, Gocutishok, Ostrovets, Varena and Radun districts.